

Protecting Yourself Against Biological Threats Received by Mail

Biological threats can frequently be controlled by screening materials and by following the procedures listed below. Emergency response agencies have plans in place to deal with these types of threats. Following the procedures below will activate those plans and promote the highest level of safety while minimizing the disruption associated with these incidents.

1. All mail and package delivery should be screened for suspicious letters and/or packages. Marking and features to look for include:

- o **No return address**
- o **Hand written or poorly typed address**
- o **Misspelling of common words**
- o **Restrictive markings such as "Confidential", "Personal", etc.**
- o **Excessive weight and/or feel of a powdery or foreign substance, leaking of package**

2. Suspicious letters and packages **should not be opened** and should not be handled any more than is absolutely necessary. If there is nothing leaking from the suspicious item leave it alone and call the Emergency Dispatch Operator Number: **286**. If the package is leaking, try to put it in a non-porous container and call Emergency responders.

3. If you open a letter/package that claims to have contaminated you, place it in a plastic bag and seal it. Do not handle the suspicious item any more and do NOT let anyone else handle the item. The person that opened the envelope/package and anyone who came in contact with the envelope/package or its contents after it was opened, should **immediately wash their hands with soap and water** (10% bleach is also effective). If you are covered with a significant amount of an unknown substance, stay in the room and have someone bring you some clean clothing to change into and place the contaminated clothing in a plastic trash bag. Then, wash your hands with soap and water. Call the Emergency Dispatch Operator Number: **286**, to report the letter and tell the dispatcher you have opened the envelope/package, there is a substance inside, and what you have done up to that point.

4. Emergency responders can evaluate the risk to those in the room at the time of potential exposure as well as any impact on the remainder of the building. Based upon that risk assessment, further emergency measures may be implemented as necessary. If the risk is found to be minimal, other areas of the facility will not be disrupted and any necessary actions to return the area involved to normal activity will begin as soon as possible.